

February 8, 2010

# Legislative Update 2010



Iowa Department of Human Services

## Special points of interest:

- \* Krogmeier Confirmed
- \* IowaCare Update
- \* Medicaid Update
- \* Refugee Services

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## "Proven Capacity to Lead"

This week the Iowa Senate confirmed the appointment of Charlie Krogmeier as Director of DHS. Senator Amanda Ragan (D-Mason City) spoke about Charlie's "distinguished career", "management skills demanded in these times of budget constraints and state government reorganization", and "heartfelt dedication to those he serves, often the most needy of our fellow Io-

wans". The confirmation vote was 47-0. Director Krogmeier appreciates the Senate's support, in particular, the bi-partisan vote and looks forward to working with policymakers to face the difficult challenges that lie ahead.



## "Bridge to National Health Care"

Medicaid Director Jennifer Vermeer spoke before the Joint Human Resources Budget Subcommittee last week and provided an update on the IowaCare program, describing it as a program de-

signed initially as a "bridge to national health care". Vermeer explained that IowaCare is a limited benefit package under a CMS waiver that covers a population of our society that other programs

do not cover; adults ages 19-64 under 200% poverty level. The waiver is set to sunset in 2010. See DHS proposal, SF 2156, for legislation that extends the sunset.

## “Medicaid Increase Due Mostly to Kids”

Medicaid Director Jennifer Vermeer also updated legislators on Medicaid trends. She explained that the “steep increase” that started last year is mostly due to children. In addition, the deepening recession has definitely impacted Medicaid. Vermeer projected that the increase in

enrollment coupled with a loss of federal stimulus funds results in a FY2011 Funding Shortfall of about \$183.5 Million. Vermeer pointed out to legislators, after a question from Rep Heaton (R-Mt Pleasant) that the Governor’s FY 11 budget recommendation fully funds Medicaid.

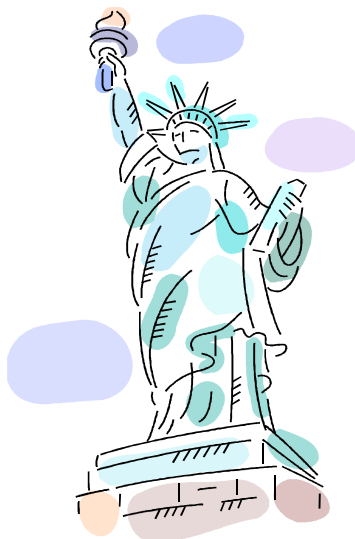


## “We Were a Pioneer”

Representative Dave Heaton (R-Mt. Pleasant) responded to the presentation by Vern Armstrong and John Wilken of DHS about Iowa’s Refugee program before the Human Services Budget Subcommittee this week by saying he was saddened and frustrated. Heaton said that “we were a pioneer” in providing these services that our communities benefitted from the refugees who made Iowa their home. Armstrong responded that we felt the same but were bound by the decision of

the US Department of State decision that Iowa does not meet the criteria of “a non-profit organization with multiple locations across the United States” and therefore would no longer eligible to receive federal funds for the program. The US State Department letter recognized Iowa’s proud history of settling refugees since November 17, 1975 when the first Laotian Tai Dam refugees arrived. In particular, the letter acknowledged Governor Ray’s dedication and leadership when he responded to

President Ford’s urgent request for Americans to resettle the Southeast Asian refugees. Under the Promise Jobs program DHS will be able to continue to offer employment related services to refugees.



### Did you know?

That students at the State Training School at Eldora help to build Habitat for Humanity Homes?

## **Upcoming Events**

### **February 8 at 10:00—**

Public hearing on SF 2088, State Government Reorganization. Room 103, Supreme Court Chamber.

### **February 8 at 7:45 a.m.—**

Administrative Rules Review Committee, Rm 116

**\*Schedule subject to change**



## **“First Funnel this Week”**

Under the new, shortened Session deadlines the first funnel is already upon us. Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup> will be the deadline for House bills to be reported out of House Committees and Senate bills to be reported out of

Senate Committees. DHS pre-file bills have made it through the funnels, with the exceptions of HSB 629 & SSB 3139, the proposals to revise Iowa Code Chapter 230A on Community Mental Health Centers. The proposal did not have the full support of key stakeholders and therefore it was determined that further work over the interim is needed on this proposal.

## **“On a Lighter Note”**

DHS Legislative Liaison wants to thank the state troopers who removed her and another lobbyist from the elevator stuck at the State Capitol on Thursday evening. They were only stuck for about 15 minutes but still not the most pleasant way to spend time at the Capitol. Nice to know the phone located in the elevator does work when needed.

## **Did you know?**

The new table of organization for the Department of Human Services is now available on the website. Go to “Public Information” then click on “DHS Structure and Divisions” then click on “Table of Organization”.



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**The Mission of the Iowa Department of Human Services is to help individuals and families achieve safe, stable, self-sufficient, and healthy lives, thereby contributing to the economic growth of the state. We do this by keeping a customer focus, striving for excellence, sound stewardship of state resources, maximizing the use of federal funding and leveraging opportunities, and by working with our public and private partners to achieve results.**

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